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U.S. EPA Awards Los Angeles \$495,000 towards Cleaner School Buses

SAN FRANCISCO - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently awarded the South Coast Air Quality Management District in Los Angeles \$495,000 for retrofitting school buses with clean diesel technology.

The AQMD will use the funds towards replacing seven pre-1987 diesel school buses with new compressed natural gas buses. The grant will also install up to 100 diesel oxidation catalysts on 1990 to 1993 model year diesel school buses in primarily environmental justice areas.

"The EPA is working to eliminate the health impacts to children from diesel pollution," said Wayne Nastri, the EPA's administrator for the Pacific Southwest region. "I recognize that the more we do to eliminate diesel pollution impacting our children the better they are able to learn and grow into healthy adults."

There are 4,500 buses operating in the four county South Coast Air Quality Management District area of Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange. These school buses tend to be older vehicles operating on diesel engines that have significantly higher nitrogen oxides and particulate matter emissions levels compared to current emission standards.

"We are very concerned with the health impacts associated with diesel emissions," said Barry Wallerstein, executive officer for the South Coast Air Quality Management District. "EPA's funding will boost our ongoing efforts to remove the large number of older, dirty diesel school buses from the greater Los Angeles area."

The EPA funding complements current AQMD programs to substantially reduce pollution and provide safer school transportation for children. About 50 percent of the EPA funds will cover the incremental cost to buy up to 7 new compressed natural gas buses, to replace seven high emitting, pre-1987 buses. The remaining funds will be used to install up to 100 diesel oxidation catalysts on 1990 to 1993 diesel buses.

The goal of Clean School Bus USA is to reduce both children's exposure to diesel exhaust and the amount of air pollution created by diesel school buses.

School buses are the safest way for children to get to school. However, pollution from diesel vehicles has health implications for everyone, especially children. Clean School Bus USA brings together partners from business, education, transportation, and public health organizations to work toward these goals:

- Encouraging policies and practices to eliminate unnecessary public school bus idling.
- School buses retrofits that will remain in the fleet with better emission control technologies and/or fueling them with cleaner fuels.
- Replacing the oldest buses in the fleet with new, less polluting buses.

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